

## **EXHIBIT “A”**

The Honorable Cynthia M. Rufe  
United States District Court  
Room 12614, U.S. Courthouse  
601 Market Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19106

Your Honour,

This letter is a letter of character regarding Jose R Tirado.

My name is Jennifer Rivera. I am an assistant Supervisor for medical billing at Quest Diagnostics. I have worked at Quest for 14 years. I have been a lifelong friend of Jose's for 26 years and now ex-wife of 10 years from Jose R Tirado. Jose and I were friends during childhood and have remained close even after our divorce. I know Jose about as well as any person other than his immediate family could.

I am aware of the events regarding Jose's guilty plea, and I am aware of what has transpired in the restitution of the money that he took. I truly believe that Jose has already suffered extensively for his actions. He has lost credibility in the public eye, and I believe he is truly despondent regarding what he has put his family through. His is a good family. Jose's mother, fiancé, and children are certainly not deserving of what they have been through. He is a very responsible Son, brother and father. Despite having a family of his own, he continues to support his cousins and brother's in every possible way he can. He is currently working Construction within his neighborhood. He has been working hard at building the community around him by providing jobs to those who need it and bettering the community by fixing abandoned properties in his neighborhood.

I believe that an extended prison term will serve as a tremendous hardship for his fiancé, who will bear the responsibility of trying to repay the costs of the court case and restitution. I believe that Jose's Son's, one of whom is currently away attending college, will be tremendously adversely affected if Jose is required to go to prison. It would also affect those whom to this point have relied on him for job opportunities. He is a very productive member of his community. His absence will be a big impact on those who relies on Jose.

I understand the distressing circumstances that José faces. He has expressed his deepest regrets about his crime to me, particularly its grave repercussions for his family and career. Because of the significant difficulties that will be faced by his family, who themselves were blameless in this crime; I would ask for you, the judge, to grant Jose a leniency of probation or at least the lowest possible sentence. I believe that the loss of his credentials, his loss of accreditation for his vocation, and the loss of respect in the community, as well as those freedoms that he was afforded prior to his felony conviction, may have taken a bigger effect than keeping him out of the work force. He certainly will not be in a position to be able to repeat his offense and, quite frankly, I cannot imagine that he will ever repeat any illegal activity.

If necessary, I am willing to give oral evidence to the court for Jose. You can contact me on (267)259-8791.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Rivera

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Bernard Lyman  
666 west Germantown Pike, apt 1414  
Plymouth Meeting, PA. 19462  
267-269-2101

April 14, 2016

The Honorable Cynthia M. Rufe  
United States District Court  
Room 12614, U.S. Courthouse  
601 Market Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19106

Dear Your Honor,

By way of introduction, my name is Bernard Lyman and I am a 86 years old retired electrician. I am writing to you to share with you my thoughts on Jose Tirado. I am aware of the criminal court case (13-0008) against Mr. Tirado although this letter is to speak about my relationship with Mr. Tirado and his character only.

I am a retired electrical contractor who has serviced the city of Philadelphia for the past sixty five years (65 years). I have been working in urban areas in the city to rebuilt the urban areas and bring back areas in the city which have not been address or been looked over by many individuals for many years.

I first met Jose Tirado in 2012, over 4 years ago. I met Mr. Tirado threw a mutual friend and Mr. Tirado had a general contracting company with several local people from the neighborhood and he wanted to try to extend his company to hire more local personal. Mr. Tirado asked me if I was interested in helping him open a electrical contracting portion of his company to hire more local neighborhood workers. I agreed to assist him with his expansion of his plan to hire more local help. I came out of retirement to help Mr. Tirado and I don't regret it because I have seen him grow and help a lot of people in the local neighborhood. I am proud to see how Mr. Tirado has shown and train individuals who have no experience in electrical services and give local individuals who would not have had a chance in the electrical field the experience and knowledge to conduct electrical work.

Over time, Mr. Tirado not only gained my respect but my trust. In my experience working with Mr. Tirado is that he is a honest and trustworthy person and is committed to both the Kensington community by employing and working within the community. He has as recently been awarded a large electrical contract in the

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Kensington community: this will give him the opportunity to employ more local people who will be productive members of society. Mr. Tirado with this contract will be able to hire an additional 5-10 more employees. I have seen Mr. Tirado start from 4-5 employees to over 30-40 employees. I am amazed at his drive and willing to help people out. I have seen that he asked nothing in return but to help individuals learn a trade and show them how to use it.

It is critical to understand the environment in Kensington where we are currently working in. It is filled with drugs, gangs and crime. The opportunities for employment are very hard to come by. Without Jose, many of the members of the community will loss there only means of employment and the only means of a way to make a honest living and pay their bills and earn a honest paycheck.

I have also been able to witness Jose as a family man. There is nothing he values more than his family. Jose takes care of a lot of his family members and is also currently raising his niece who her mother is a current drug addict and the courts have awarded him and his wife temporary custody of her for the past 3 years. With his own family, he has worked hard and currently has both of his sons currently enrolled in college and has strived to make them a great asset to the community.

Although I can't say anything about the actual case against him, I know Jose is a great leader and a positive role model in the community and with his help he can be a positive role model to everyone in the community that hard work has its rewards. I understand he did something wrong and there are penalties for these actions but I believe that his continuous efforts should not go unnoticed and should be giving a chance to continue to help the local community and help others as himself who have messed up become something better and more positive in society. I truly believe that Mr. Tirado is a very value member-to this community and to our society.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. 267-269-2102.

Sincerely,

Bernard Lyman  
Electrical Contractor

Dear honorable judge Rufe:

Hello your honor judge Rufe, my name is Roberto Lopez and I am a person who is currently employed by Jose Tirado who is currently facing charges in your court room for making tax related offenses. I would like to give a little insight into Jose Tirado the person I know. I met Jose Tirado about 10 years ago in Philadelphia, pa. I had just recently came from texas after a bad separation from the mother of my three boys. I got to Philadelphia and had no where to go and I was staying on the streets. I honestly don't like to talk about it but I was a heavy drug addict and didn't have a care in the world. I met Jose Tirado one day while he was working on a property I came up to him and asked him if he needed any help or hiring anyone. I ask him if I could get the scrap metal in the house he was working on so I may have money cause I didn't have a job or a place to stay. Jose Tirado looked at me and without me saying another word he offered me food and a place to stay. He also offered me a job and bought me clothes before I did anything for him. I was amazed as this person I didn't know was willing to help me. I was given a home a job and clothing all in the first day of meeting jose tirado. While working for Jose Tirado I got news that my ex-wife Jennifer turned all three of my sons over to CPS (Child Protective Services) in Texas. Jose Tirado came and paid for my ticket to go to Texas and paid for me and my three kids to come back to Philadelphia, pa. when we got back Jose Tirado gave me a house big enough to fit all my kids. While taking care of my kids I relapsed and I found myself with a DHS case. Once again Jose Tirado took it a pond himself to help me and before my kids were sent to a foster home. Jose Tirado let me and my boys moved into his personally house and took care of me and my boys. I am amazed that a person who has no relations or blood could care and be so helpful to me and my family without anything in return. I am sorry and I didn't want to make this about myself but I wanted for you to see that my personal experience first hand of how a person like Jose Tirado has helped me and my family. I also have seen the remorse and hurt that Jose Tirado is going thru after losing his job which he loved to do everyday. I seen him try and help many people not only myself. I have personally seen Jose Tirado start all over and start building a contracting company and hire local people from the neighborhood. He currently has 10-13 people presently working for him on rebuilding local old building and helping the urban community come back from the ashes. I know that Jose Tirado is worried about his outcome in the courts.cause he is worried about all of his employees and there family members. Jose Tirado has been very honest with all of his employees about his situation and feels like he let a lot of people down. I can only hope that your honor will be lenient with Jose Tirado and let him continue to let him help all the workers who have jobs and are being productive person to sociality. Your Honor Rufe I am not the judge but I can ask you if possible to see it in your heart to punish Jose Tirado but if possible to give thought of possible to consider non-incarceration alternatives. I respectfully only request this because the impact of Jose Tirado going to jail will be very hurtfully and many workers as myself and others will be out of jobs and this will impact a lot of family. I believe Jose Tirado has learned from this situation and I have seen him come and try to help a lot of people and I believe that

he has a lot of good in him to make sure plenty of people will have jobs and a way to earn a honest living and be part of something bigger. I would like to thank you for taking the time and reading this letter and hopefully you will have another side and insight of Jose Tirado as me and many other people have seen of him everyday.

Yours Truly,  
Roberto Lopez  
1105 e. tioga street  
Philadelphia, PA. 19134

Imar L. Hutchins  
1100 Florida Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20009  
(646) 220-6062

April 15, 2016

The Honorable Cynthia M. Rufe  
United States District Court  
Room 12614, U.S. Courthouse  
601 Market Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19106

**Re: Character Statement – Jose Tirado**

Dear Hon. Judge Rufe,

This letter is to advise the court of my opinion of the character of Mr. Jose Tirado. I understand that he currently has a criminal case before the court (case no. 13-0008). While I am not familiar with the particulars of his case; nevertheless, I would like to take this opportunity to write about my relationship with Mr. Tirado.

Along with Brian Murray, I co-founded Shift Capital, a community-focused real estate development concern. Our primary project is the redevelopment of a part of the Kensington neighborhood in Philadelphia. I met Jose in 2012 after we purchased a large dilapidated industrial building in Kensington and began to rehabilitate the building.

Jose immediately impressed us a hard worker. At that point he was only doing basic demolition work, but his leadership and work ethic impressed us from the start. As part of our commitment to the community, in time, we assisted him in setting up his own contracting company, through which he, in turn, hired local residents and gave opportunities to people who otherwise might not have had them.

It is in his role as the leader of his own business that I observed that Jose Tirado is a true community leader. At this point, he has provided jobs and valuable training to scores of largely overlooked members of the Kensington community. This is no small statement when one considers the drugs, blight and crime that has plagued the neighborhood for years.

In time, Jose has become a valued partner in our projects. He has provided opportunities and second chances at life to more people than I can count. I have seen him grow over the past few years both personally and professionally. I have seen him supply mentorship and guidance to his employees or other members of the community in need.

I have also seen him show selfless devotion to his children and other young people as he has even helped to raise, or serve as a surrogate parent to, other family members. He always places emphasis on education and is proud of trying to help his kids obtain college degrees.

It is my pleasure to write this letter pertaining to Mr. Tirado's character. If I may be of further assistance or if you have any other questions, please feel free to contact me at 646-220-6062.

Very truly yours,



IMAR L. HUTCHINS



April 11, 2016

The Honorable Cynthia M. Rufe  
United States District Court  
Room 12614, U.S. Courthouse  
601 Market Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19106

Dear Your Honor,

I am writing to you to share with you my thoughts on Jose Tirado. I am aware of the criminal court case (13-0008) against Mr. Tirado although this letter is to speak about my relationship with Mr. Tirado and his character only.

By way of introduction, my name is Brian Murray. I am the Principal and Founder of Shift Capital, a real estate development firm located in Philadelphia dedicated to transforming communities through real estate. We have over 20 million dollars in assets in the Kensington neighborhood of Philadelphia.

I first met Jose Tirado in 2012, shortly after purchasing an abandoned industrial building in his neighborhood that we planned to rehab. Mr. Tirado approached us and offered to do some small jobs for us – mostly demo work. At the time, our goal was to provide opportunities for local residents to participate in our project and we helped Mr. Tirado get his contractor's license and insurance.

Over time, Mr. Tirado not only gained our trust but also has become an invaluable partner of our group. He grew from a few members of his crew when we first started to more than 30 today. He is the General Contractor and Electrician on two of our projects and has shown integrity and grit in overcoming challenges along the way.

What is impressive is that he has hired all local and has given many folks in this community an opportunity to work on a project in their neighborhood. Many of these people are 2<sup>nd</sup> chance workers who would not have the opportunities elsewhere in society. He has helped guide them, support them and encourage them along the way.

It is critical to understand the environment in Kensington where we are working. It is filled with drugs, gangs and crime. The opportunities for employment are few and



far between. Without Jose, many of the members of his team would have fallen back into the societal trap that has defined their lives.

I have also been able to witness Jose as a family man. There is nothing he values above his family. He takes in family members who are down on their luck, he has raised children that are not his own and he has supported many who don't have the financial resources to even go to the hospital. With his own family, he has worked hard to ensure that his kids get a college education and has prioritized that above all else.

Although I can't say anything about the actual case against him, I know Jose as a courageous, sensitive and inspirational leader for his community. Over the last 3 years, he has created over 70 jobs for his community with our work and other jobs he is now picking up. He is a value to this community and to our society.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. 917-699-7347.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "AB Murray".

Brian Murray  
Founder, Shift Capital

Dear Honorable Cynthia M. Ruth,

My name is José Tirado III, and I am the son of José Tirado II. Thank you for taking time in reading my testimony. My only intention in writing this letter is to further reveal my father to you.

Growing up, I've learned what it meant to be an honest, selfless, and caring person from the many initiatives my father took. Besides my father explicitly teaching me and my brother what it meant to be caring and helpful, we witnessed, for most of our childhood, his love for community and communal prosperity.

My family's socioeconomic status resides mostly within the poor/working-class bracket. The cost of living, as we know, isn't equitable or sustainable for working class people. Between inflation, the competitive work force, and the tiresome pursuit of achieving and maintaining economic security, the cost of living required more from us than our unreliable working-class salaries could provide. Multiple, inescapable responsibilities, such as providing our community's youth with equitable educational and social development, figuring out how to finance meals, rent, and health care, working over 50 hours a week, and taking care of our sick family, entailed constant financial, emotional, and mental risk. There was hardly any time for self-care, which we need in order to sustain our efforts in making a living.

The cost of living costs more than an average working class salary could afford. This forces working class people, like my family, to budget every aspect of their life meticulously, generating a paycheck to paycheck economic lifestyle. With very few of my family members being home owners or college graduates, attaining economic mobility was a lot harder. Our friends and family, in their times of need, ended up living with us in our home. This disrupted my traditional sense of home and community. I was confronted with the reality that there is such a thing as economic hardship. Whoever needed help stood with us in our home, and our family and community was in constant need of help.

Since his arrest my father, with the help of our family and community, was able to establish a residential and auto-repair family business that worked to ensure our family, and our community, with the economic security we were working for. Our family business has generated enough over the years, to allow my brother and I to go to college; my cousins, who weren't able to afford college, are now employed and live in their own homes; my sick grandmother now owns her home, which allows for her to dedicate more time self-care; my uncles, who's mental health issues made it harder for them to attain and sustain employment, are now better off. My cousin's and aunts are now also able to benefit from their uncle's economic help finance their own children's educational and social development. Our family business was made by our community, for our community, with the intention of enriching our community.

My father, with the help of the community, has established a economic support system that increased our community's employment, decreased its poverty, and stimulated generative wealth that helped to ensure our community with equitable social and economic security.

The only meaning of life my family and I knew; both by force and by will, was the enrichment of life: to better our reality, as a community, for now and generations to come.

My father taught me some of the world's imperfections, but also taught me to work hard in solving some of its issues. The value of love, family, and hope was passed down to me by my father. I am now in a position where I can make a difference. I plan to use the wealth and capital of my community's family business to further enrich both my and any community's circumstance. My focus on life is community redevelopment. The intellectual, emotional, social,

and financial well-being of working-class, poor, and all types of people, is of deep concern to me. And I attribute my concern and love for humanity to my father.

My father's absence would actively and negatively affect our community's economic wellbeing. There are certain skills, such as freelance construction, bureaucratic management, logistical understandings of marketing and business that my father knows well. These skills and knowledge are indispensable to the function of our family business. Without my father, our family business, and therefore our economic security, is at risk.

I know you have multiple options for trying my father. I respect the work put into this evaluation process. Thank you for reading and considering my letter up to this point. I have no power over how my father's case will play out, but all I can do is openly and honestly reveal my father to you. There are, unsurprisingly, different understandings of my father coming from different sources. But the most reliable and accurate understanding of my father comes from the perspectives of people who know him most intimately: his children, his mother, his friends, his community, and even you, if you had the opportunity. My father's actions were only motivated by genuine love and concern. I only ask for the consideration of my father's value to his community. My father's presence in the community helped eradicate financial and emotional instability while also stimulating a desire to establish a community based in interdependence, love, and hard work.

Thank you, again, for your time.

Humbly,  
José Rafael Tirado III